

Guidelines for Regional Soapbox Events



Each Europe Direct Information Centre will host a regional soapbox competition on the topic “European Elections: Every Vote Counts”. There will be two separate categories in the competition, 18 & under and 19 & over. A winner and one runner-up in each of the two categories will be chosen by a judging panel. Both category winners from each regional competition will proceed to debate in the national final held in the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, Dublin on Tuesday, 27 November 2018.

Date, Time and Venue

Each regional soapbox competition will be held in either September, October or November 2018. The event will take place in the Europe Direct Centre at a time that accommodates those at work as well as younger participants. The regional final must be held sufficiently in advance of the national final to allow for planning and travel arrangements of the finalists. The national final will take place on Tuesday, 27 November at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, Dublin.

Publicity

Libraries Development, LGMA will supply each Europe Direct Centre with promotional posters. The centre will display the promotional material in the centre and also distribute them to other public libraries in the authority, local schools and other relevant local groups and institutions.

Each centre will promote their regional soapbox event on both their centre’s webpage on the Europe Direct website and on the library service’s website. Each centre will also contact local newspapers and radio stations and agree promotional segments on the soapbox event.

The following organisations in the region will be contacted directly by each centre to inform them about the event and to encourage applications for entry:

Secondary schools; Third level debating societies; Toastmasters and other debating/public speaking groups; relevant interest groups.

Entrants

Entrants aged 18 & under will be entered into the schools’ category and entrants aged 19 & over will be entered in the adults’ category.

Libraries Development, LGMA will supply each centre with an entrants' registration form template in digital format. Forms will be made available in the centre and entrants will need to return forms to the centre in advance of the closing date for registration, as determined by the centre.

Chair and Judging Panel

Each Europe Direct centre will contact their local MEP to issue an invitation to chair the event. The chairperson will manage the debate effectively and maintain the audience's attention between speakers. She/he will be provided with a briefing of the event, including running order and details of speakers.

Each Europe Direct centre will also identify, contact and secure three judges to form a judging panel for the regional competition. One judge will have expertise on the topic, another a background in public speaking and the third judge will be a local public figure who will act as the chair of the judging panel.

Presentations

Each speaker will give a three-minute presentation either for or against the soapbox topic. The presentation will be made at the regional competition before a public audience and panel of judges.

The order of speakers will be decided by random draw before the event.

A library staff member will act as timekeeper for each presentation. At 2 minutes 30 seconds, a bell will be rung to inform of 30 seconds remaining. At 2 minutes 50 seconds, a second bell will ring to inform of 10 seconds remaining. At 3 minutes, the final bell will ring to inform contestant that the full 3 minutes have been reached. Each speaker will have 5 additional seconds to wrap up their speech. Speakers will be informed of the timekeeping procedure in advance.

Evaluation

Each speaker, in both categories, will be judged on the following elements of their presentation: content, delivery, structure, and overall impact. Marking for each of these elements will be weighted equally. A maximum of 25 marks can be awarded for each element. The decision of the judges at the event is final.

Winners

Two category winners, one from each of the schools' and adults' categories, will be chosen at each regional event as well as one runner-up from each category.

The two category winners of the regional competition will qualify for the national soapbox final in November. In the event of a regional winner being unable to travel, a runner up will be invited to compete at the final in their place.

Regional Prizes

The two category winners (schools and adults) will be awarded an iPad each, sponsored by the European Commission Representation. Prizes for the runners-up will be organised locally by the EDIC.

Refreshments

Refreshments will be provided at the event.

Photographer

Photos will be taken of the event and uploaded to the regional centre's page on the Europe Direct website and distributed to the press.

Information on the National Soapbox Final

The national final will take place at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland on Tuesday, 27 November.

The final competition will be divided into two categories, schools and adults, with winners from each of the regional competitions delivering the same presentation they gave at the regional event.

The time allocation for each speaker's presentation will be the same as the regional competition, each contestant having 3 minutes to speak. At 2 minutes 30 seconds, a bell will be rung to inform of 30 seconds remaining. At 2 minutes 50 seconds, a second bell will ring to inform of 10 seconds remaining. At 3 minutes, the final bell will ring to inform contestant that the full 3 minutes have been reached. Each speaker will have 5 additional seconds to wrap up their speech

The invited audience at the national final will include representatives from government

departments, the European Commission Representation in Ireland, local authorities and education institutions, national organisations whose work relates to the topic of the soapbox and national media. Each speaker will be provided with a number of guest invitations and the winner of each regional schools' category will receive an invitation to bring a class group from their school to the final. Any allowance provided by the regional centres, from their Europe Direct funding allocation, to the travel costs for speakers or speakers' guests will be at the discretion of each regional centre.

The overall winner in each category at the final will be presented with a prize of €1,000 and a trip to Brussels to visit the European Parliament. Libraries Development will secure this prize which is sponsored by the European Commission Representation in Ireland and local Members of the European Parliament.